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MARCH 1983

CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE PLANNING SESSION HELD IN LOS ANGELES

by Richard Ploen
General Conference
Coordinator

When General Conference XI begins on Monday morning at 8:15 am with worship in the huge Convocation Hall at the University of Toronto, it will begin a series of events and programs that will be both interesting and enjoyable.

The week-long Conference provides opportunity for official delegates to come together to take care of the business of the Fellowship but this will be mixed with informative workshops, special interest meetings, a rally, a fair, good food and fellowship.

The Conference Planning Committee met in Los Angeles over the week-end of January 29 and 30 and got down to the hard work of seeing to it that this conference is going to be a worshwhile event. Worship Services will be held both morning and evening, with special music, use of the great organ in Convocation Hall, a volunteer orchestra (a first for a General Conference!) a Deaf Choir and instrumental and vocal soloists. The music at this conference portends to be a high point of the whole event with Danny Ray as Music Director from Dallas MCC.

After Morning Worship the delegates and attendees will move over to the Medical Sciences Building on the campus of the University of Toronto to have business meetings and seminars in the class rooms and Auditorium.

Dr. Virginia Mollencott will be the special speaker this year. Her address will be given on Thursday morning. A period of time is planned afterwards for interested people to meet with her. She is a fascinating speaker and should provide another interest point in the conference.

MCC Toronto plans a hospitality room to be open most of the hours of the week. The people of Toronto have scheduled a major dance to be held on the Saturday night of conference. In addition, for those who are not delegates and would like tours of the city and other interesting places, these will be available in the afternoons.

General Conference will conclude with a worship service on Sunday morning. This will be a fitting end to a week of making new friends, of meeting old acquaintances and fellowshipping with them and of working and planning together for the future.

The Planning Committee this year is made up of the following people: Gary Chapman, from the host Church in Toronto; Adam DeBaugh, Media Coordinator; Renee McCoy, Worship Planner; Danny Ray, Music Director; and the Management Team: Nancy Wilson, Clerk of the Board of Elders; Michael Mank, Treasurer of the Board of Elders; Phil Gallnitz, Fellowship Office Administrator and Richard Ploen, Conference Coordinator.

FRONT ROW: Rev. Nancy Wilson, Rev. Renee McCoy, Phil Gallnitz. BACK ROW: R. Adam DeBaugh, Michael Mank, Danny Ray, Gary Chapman.

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COVER: Rick O'Dell

The other side of alcohol recovery living

by Kurt Kreisler
Collective Member

I watched him from my vantage point in the car...maneuvering his market basket from one point to the other, barely able to walk. Disheveled, dirty...forgotten and ignored...drunk. His practiced eye singled out individuals that looked like easy marks for a hand out. "A little change for something to eat?" He checked his pocket. Almost enough for another cheap bottle of wine, panacea for that empty ache inside of him.

My heart went out, torn between giving him a buck to help kill the pain or to shake him violently in an attempt to wake him up. I was no stranger to that pain. I knew it well. I felt it again as I watched him and breathed a sigh of relief that I had made friends with it...embraced it... learned to live with it and be grateful.

At my drunkest moments I had come within inches of the gutter, known the spectre of it, feared it...and in the throes of my anxious hopelessness had almost wished for it...just to get it over with, hit bottom...meet my fate so that I could truly wallow in my self-pity...justify myself as a failure.

Six times through the hospital circuit had taught me nothing in two years. I still fell into the gutter between two parked cars and couldn't get up...still wet the bed...still poured myself that first drink in the morning with hands shaking so badly that I spilled the liquor all over the floor... still had the dry heaves...still had blackouts that blotted out all memory...and worse. I had truly lost the battle.

That was three years of sobriety and many tense moments ago. It's hard to say what happened except that I did hit bottom...and then discovered, to my surprise, that people really did care what happened to me. They were willing to help...not do the work for me...but help and support. It meant picking myself up by the boot straps and facing the things that I usually drank to forget, to ignore.

I'd been around Alcoholics Anonymous enough to have memorized all of their little cliches that did so much to keep me sober. One in particular stuck in my mind..."One day at a time." I learned the hard way that sometimes it was only one hour at a time...one minute that I wouldn't drink. I also learned to know that I didn't have to be ashamed to be an alcoholic. I was in good company...there were millions of us. It was a disease, not a sin. It was a sin only if I let it destroy me instead of treating it the only way possible...stop drinking.

When I got sober the problems were still there. Life was still a hassle at times, but it was easier, in the long run, and more satisfying to face it with a clear head. No more rabid fear of being too long away from the bottle, too far away from my next drink. Life looks a lot different when it's not viewed through the bottom of a scotch bottle! The distortion is gone. There's a clarity to life that is a satisfaction in and of itself. Rewarding.

Two things I learned above all others. One, I can be proud of myself for what I've done, and two, I can't successfully replace people with booze. My gratitude is boundless to my friends, the people I work with, the staff at the Fellowship Offices. Without them I might be pushing that cart around,

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profile

"A Gift of Death"
by Michael E. England
Pastor--MCC of San Francisco

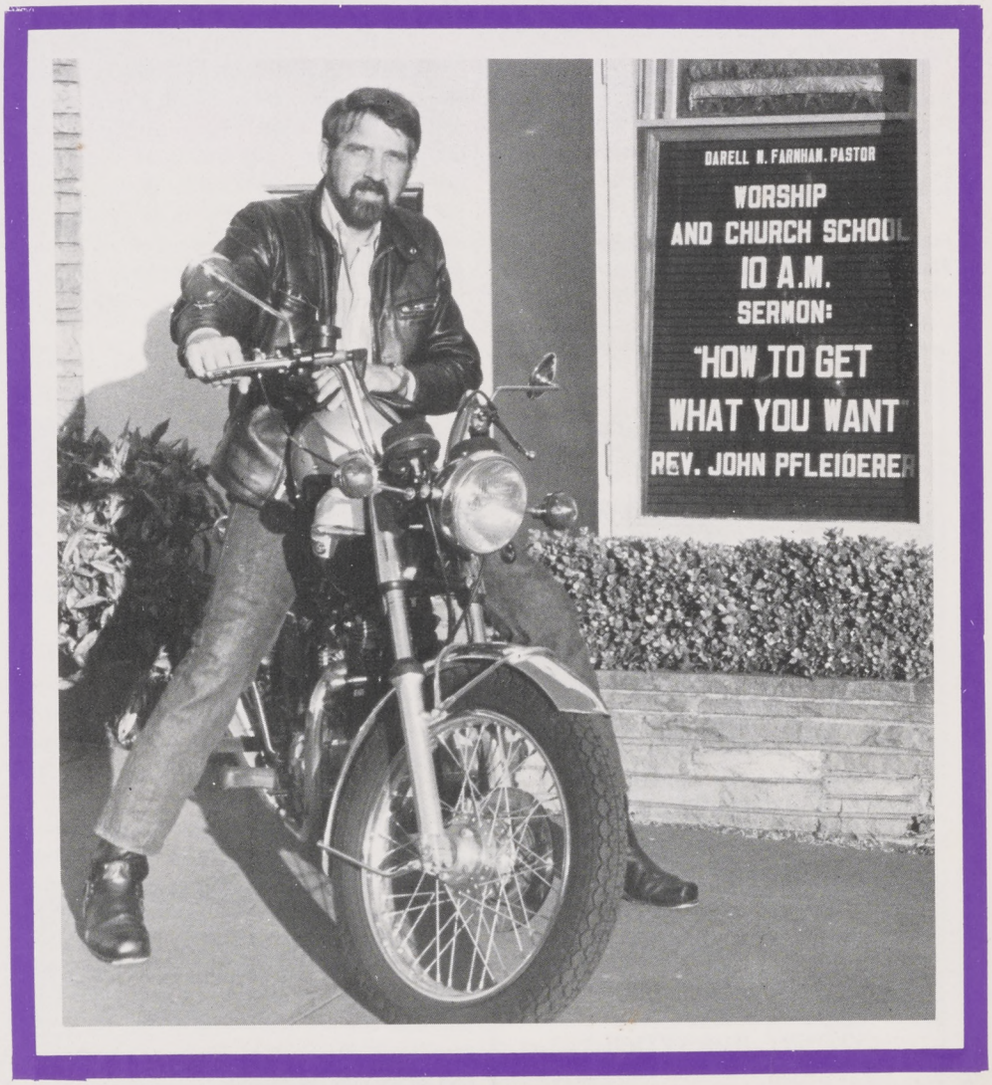
In a recent *Journey*, there was a brief article about the death of one of our clergy, John Pfleiderer, whom most of you didn't know. His ministry and his death with us in MCC of San Francisco were of such a quality that I feel a keen longing to share them. We are young, still, as a denomination, as a community of faith. At first I fretted that a commentary on John's death would be just another *Love Story* or *A Man Called Peter* – already done and perhaps a little obvious or pointless or even sappy. But we in UFMCC have barely had time to *live* together, let alone die together. And in our congregation John, and God, gave us a gift of death when we didn't even know it was a gift.

John's thirty-year ministry was a varied one, an effective one, a mixture of life's elements. (Whose isn't?) He was a Methodist, until his coming out and the weakness of friends in authority shut him out. Then he was a welcome addition to the ranks of the UCC. And, ten or eleven years ago, he also joined MCC San Francisco because he loved and believed in what we were. He applied for UFMCC clergy credentials some years back, but there was some sad misunderstanding and confused communication (could that *ever* been true of us?) and he was passed by. God *will* bring good out of all, so God took him into a five-year, distinguished pastorate of a mostly Black UCC congregation in San Francisco. He led them down some new roads, like participating in an interdenominational service opposing the anti-gay Briggs Initiative. Like their choir joining that of MCC SF, eventually to give birth to the San Francisco Interfaith Choir.

Then last summer when he resigned that pastorate he came to me to talk. It was time, finally, to work again toward bringing himself and his credentials to our Fellowship. And to the joy of our years of friendship was added the joy of appointing him, as a volunteer, to our clergy staff. What a new sparkle he brought to our Tuesday morning staff meetings. He rode up on his big black bike and strode into the room, 6' 4" of strapping gentleness and wisdom. In August we had three birthday and anniversary celebrations in our staff gatherings and John always brought the champagne and chilled pewter goblets. How odd that people who didn't know him well were sometimes intimidated by his size. He was such a teddy bear. (Who liked being called "Daddy" on personal, private occasions!)

The staff situation was so smooth and happy for me. Too smooth. Without challenge and change there is no growth. So God began to introduce change and growth in our staff and congregation. I spoke very sternly to God about it. God understood . . . and went right on. In September Rick left us to be pastor across the Bay. A good step, but I don't like change when I'm all settled. In October Janie announced she was leaving in mid-November to lead a new Presbyterian ministry to Lesbians and Gay men. A trail-breaker, a blessing of God, but I don't *like* change when I'm all settled. And so we needed a new full-time staff person, and suddenly in our minds there was John– right there, about to transfer to the UFMCC clergy, two Master's degrees and thirty years of ministry to bring to us. There was obviously a reason John had come to us at this point, and here was our reason it seemed.

So after prayer and discussion I explained to the congregation that I planned to appoint John and that in two



John Pfleiderer

weeks the board would vote on whether to ratify the appointment. We invited input. The next week John had some medical tests. He had hit his head in a fall and his physician lover felt it needed looking into. It did. The fall was a symptom. John was admitted for three days of inpatient testing for a suspected tumor.

John had been a member of MCC SF for 10 years. He was a regular attender when his own pastorate allowed it–mostly our smaller evening service. He was quiet, not pushy. So most folks had only begun to get to know him when he joined the staff. No matter; they loved him. During the visiting hours of his three days in the hospital his room was never empty. Often there would be five or six folks there, most of them from MCC. His nurses finally asked him, "Who *are* you?" "Just a preacher," he replied. I have never been so proud to be part of a congregation. I knew our people had learned to minister and care for each other and here it was in action. John was thrilled. His "non-believer" lover, a real sweetheart, was impressed.

Janie and I went over from the office the first day, and after our visit as we drove back I said, "I think we need to call our member who heals." (Earlier, one of my congregation had shared with me about his gift of healing and it was arranged that I'd call on him when it was appropriate.) Janie had had the same thought, so the next two days he went with us. WE joined with the others in the room (four or five each day) in an intense, beautiful time of laying on hands and prayer for healing.

During these days the diagnosis was settled–a malignant tumor deep in an inoperable area of the brain. John had between two weeks and three months of life ahead. I found something happening to me, too. I began to feel strongly that we were, indeed, led to pray for healing but that the healing God wanted to do might not be John's tumor. I began to understand in a new way for myself not to decide what God ought to do or to structure how God should work. I didn't decide that John's tumor would not be healed. I did concentrate on prayer for the healing God wanted and not the one I wanted. I didn't understand entirely, so I just had to follow a sense of call. "If we could understand God, we would be God," someone has said.

John decided to refuse chemotherapy, radical life support, all the things which would have been relatively pointless anyway. He wanted to die in dignity at home with his loved ones. And he wanted to go on working on the staff as long as he could.

He came back to the next staff meeting bearing champagne and pewter goblets. We celebrated his being home from the hospital, his life with us, the joy of our faith. We worked through our business fairly quickly and then just sat and talked. He talked about how it felt to be dying. We cried together--student clergyperson, Lesbian Presbyterian, borderline clone pastor, big butch dying teddybear.

Such trust and such sharing were among us there! What a gift he brought us in dying with us, coming home to MCC to die with *his* people. I looked across the circle and said something I once might have thought callous or at least vapid. "You know, John, I'm a little jealous. You'll be there first. You'll know what it's like, all the glory, before I will." Nope, I'm not eager to die. Neither was he. Rarely was seen such joy in life as his. But it was true, still. And he said, "I know." And hesitated. "Do you suppose there'll be a leather bar?" (John was dying and we didn't need facades any more. We didn't need to pay homage to the anti-sexual, anti-pleasure foolishness which has infected the Christian Church.) "If you want one," I said, through tears, "I guess there'll be one." Neither one of us was into materialist pearly-gates-and-streets-of-gold theology. We were just sharing our good feelings about what lay ahead in the only, very human terms we knew. "Well, when you get there," he said, "I'll show you around and I'll show you where it is." I'm only occasionally interested in leather bars, but I'll go with friends. He's my friend and we've got a date.

We went on sharing his life in our congregation and in our staff. He gave me the special privilege of sharing his personal life with him and his loved ones, too. He said he loved me for giving him his ministry with us and for sharing my people. Imagine!

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Clergy Credentials & Concerns Committee

by Larry Uhrig
Chair

The Executive committee of the CCCC met in Portland, Oregon January 18-21. The members of the executive committee are; the chair of standards, The Rev. Dusty Pruitt; the chair of concerns, The Rev. Jim Glyer; the chair of student clergy, The Rev. Claudia Vierra, and the Chair of the CCCC, The Rev. Larry J. Uhrig.

The following information is of importance to the Fellowship clergy with regard to this years' credentialing process:

If you are a licensed clergyperson and were licensed in 1981 you will be receiving your application for relicense and evaluation forms from the CCCC Washington Office. You need not request them from us as we will send them to you. By this printing you should already have them.

It is imperative that persons applying for relicense return all their forms to the Washington CCCC office no later than April 1 in order for us to schedule DRC appointments. DRC appointments cannot be scheduled if this information is not received by this date.

1983 Proficiency Exams will be offered on one day only. They will not require a two day testing as in previous years. All tests will be objective, i.e., multiple choice and true/false questions, along with matching. All tests will be graded on the day of exams and results given at the end of the testing period. Persons passing all four exams and applying for license may then proceed to their scheduled DRC appointment. The DRC appointment schedule shall be determined by the chair of the DRC and the district coordinator.

The 1983 testing structure is designed to allow us to administer the test series at the October-November District Conference, although there will continue to be only one DRC meeting per year in each District.

PLEASE NOTE: All materials for initial license and for relicense must be in triplicate to the Washington office of CCCC.

All test fees must be paid in full by March 15, 1983 in order for a candidate to take proficiency exams.

If you have any questions with regard to any portion of the credentialling process, please do not hesitate to call Mr. Gene Sir Louis clerical for CCCC at our new number (202) 638-7373, or The Rev. Larry J. Uhrig, Chair of CCCC at the same number.

We meet the World Council of Churches

by R. Adam DeBaugh
Collective Writer
Co-Chair Ecumenical Relations

In all the years of work with ecumenical relations, I don't think I have ever been prouder of the UFMCC than I was of the people of MCC in the Valley when they hosted people from the World Council of Churches.

In advance of the World Council of Churches' International Assembly in July and August, 1983, in Vancouver, British Columbia, the WCC is sending 75 teams of people all over the world to visit local congregations and experience Christian life in a wide variety of settings. The Rev. Kenneth Martin, pastor of MCC in the Valley in North Hollywood, California, invited the team visiting Southern California to the Valley church. The team accepted and came to the Valley Saturday morning, January 22.

The first miracle in a day full of miracles was that at 9:30 a.m. on a rainy Saturday morning 57 people from the Valley church turned out to meet with the WCC visitation team. The team was chaired by layperson Mrs. Mabel de Filippini, of Buenos Aires, Argentina (from the Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina), and included Mr. George Ngumi Gathuka, Thika, Kenya (a first generation Christian, lay school principal and church leader), Bishop Tore Furberg, Visby, Sweden (Church of Sweden – Lutheran), Dr. Patrick Coidan, a French national who is Associate General Secretary for Finance and Administration of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, (Reformed Church of Switzerland), and the Rev. Tyrone Pitts, Racial Justice Office, National Council of Churches, New York City (American Baptist). The team was accompanied by the Rev. Eugene Boutilier, Executive Director of the Southern California Ecumenical Council.

The Visitation Team sat before the Altar in the Valley MCC with members of the congregation arrayed before them. After a brief introduction from Martin, individuals from the congregation spoke eloquently about Third World issues, women in the church, feminism and Christianity, MCC as an extended family unit, education, lay participation, aging in the Lesbian and Gay community, ecumenical relations, and other issues arising out of the open dialogue following the presentations. Members of the congregation who were there shared in questions posed by the Visitation Team.

The Visitation Team stayed 45 minutes beyond their scheduled time as they asked questions about the UFMCC and made observations about the information MCC folks had given them. Of special interest to the Visitation Team was the reality of the ecumenical experience that the UFMCC is. They commented that they have trouble acting ecumenically since their various churches often can't agree on issues of communion, baptism and the role of women in the church. The ability of the UFMCC to blend various liturgical and worship experiences and combine in one worshipping family people from a wide variety of religious backgrounds was a source of great amazement to the Team.

Martin explained that when it becomes more important for Christians to actually get together than to talk about getting together, they will find ways to do it. It was more important for us all to join together as the UFMCC than to continue our divisions of minor points of theology and practice, because of our shared sense of oppression and alienation from the mainline churches.

As is often the case in ecumenical sharing, the experience was a profoundly moving one for the World Council of Churches' people, as it was for the UFMCC people. So many times when ordinary MCC people get a chance to share who they are and what the Fellowship means to them, we "knock their socks off." Our first face to face meeting with people from the World Council of Churches was one of great excitement and moving testimony to the value of the UFMCC in our lives as Christians.

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THE OTHER SIDE OF LIVING

begging for change, sleeping in alleys.

One out of three Gay men and Lesbians will have a problem with alcohol. That's a lot of people! Some will be 'silk sheet' drunks and some others will be gutter drunks. Silk sheet drunks have money and have more of a problem getting sober because they usually never 'hit bottom.' The others are self-explanatory. But these Lesbians and Gay men, to get sober, will have to have several things in common. They'll have to reach the point where they're sick and tired of being sick and tired...they'll admit to themselves that they have a problem...and they'll admit that fact to another human being, taking them into their confidence. That's the first and hardest part. The rest can be a simple matter of pride, courage and a lot of determination not to suffer anymore.

Most alcoholics, including myself, have a problem with self-esteem. We're conditioned to think that we can't be any good because we're drunks. It takes awhile to get back that self-worth but it is possible. Once, while addressing a group of newcomers to the AA program I was at a loss as to what to say. Then suddenly I realized a truism in my life. I told them sincerely, that I might not be sure of too many things about myself...but there was one thing I *was* sure of...I was a survivor!

Any of my sisters and brothers who are having a problem with alcohol...be a survivor. If you're sick of being sick, do something about it. Don't be ashamed to ask for help. Most people are receptive. Trust a few select friends...or even one. Trust God...whatever you conceive of God to be. Alcoholics Anonymous is a helpful base to start with. Seek out a meeting... go...and feel a part of. They'll welcome you with open arms!

I leave you with another cliche that is never-the-less true...my worst day sober is still better than my best day drunk. Join me. The rewards are worth it!

DID YOU KNOW? The UFMCC has obtained a very good insurance package. Does your pastor/church administrator need health insurance? Write: UFMCC Insurance Administrator, c/o the General Offices for complete details and premiums.

Commission On Specialized Ministries

by George S. McDermott
Chair, Specialized Ministries

Most recently the state of Rhode Island is busily engaged in attempting to have passed through the legislature a new ERA amendment to the state constitution. Until January 20 there were five different bills pending before the House and Senate in the state -- none of which included the phrase "sexual orientation."

However, a new coalition was formed consisting of 96 agencies, organizations and individuals. As one looks over the list of those agencies and individuals joining the coalition for ERA in the state of Rhode Island, it reads as a "Who's Who" of prominent groups and persons.

As a result of a large representation from the Gay and Lesbian community of Rhode Island, including Metropolitan Community Church, Dignity/Providence, Rhode Island Gay Task Force, Lesbian-Feminist Union, etc., a sixth bill was introduced on Friday, January 21, 1983, by the Coalition for ERA which included in addition to race, creed, color, gender, national origin, the additional conditions of handicap and sexual orientation.

It is of great importance that this bill, which has come to be known as a "Human Rights Bill" not only includes one's sexual orientation, but also if one were handicapped. Although, some of the other five bills did include handicap, or in the case of one, only physical handicap, at least there is finally the conscious effort to realize that there are others who are finding oppression within other minority groups.

What are your reactions when you see a blind person on the street, or suddenly find that someone within the group you are attending is deaf or hard of hearing? Would you be willing to date someone who has one arm, or possibly a prosthesis (artificial limb, etc.)? Would you be willing to approach a person in a bar who you suddenly realize cannot see you, or arrives on crutches, or you notice has some fingers missing from their hands because of an accident or disease?

Would you continue a relationship with someone if suddenly they were stricken with cancer and were found to be terminally ill or with heart trouble, or confined to bed for the rest of their life because of paralysis?

How would you answer some of these questions? How do you feel about a disabled person (whether visible or invisible disability) being in your midst? How self conscious do you feel about their presence? These are real because these people are in our midst, and other than outright extermination they will not leave. We have cried our own oppression because of our denial by others because of our sexual orientation, and yet within our own people there are those being oppressed and discriminated against because of race, ethnic background, age, gender, religious beliefs, and now disability.

It seems we forget about our reactions when others would discriminate towards us because of our sexual orientation, and too often push away the thought of anyone being discriminated by ourselves within our own people. To confront those with disabilities, or more correctly, to have the disabled confront us with their personage is to cause us to be conscious of our own short comings, our own neglect of others who have some very special needs, and most of all our call by Christ to ". . . do it unto the least of these my brothers and sisters . . ." is to have done it unto Christ.

Every effort is being made across the Fellowship to make it possible for those with special needs to have access to some of the same materials as others. For those who are deaf and hard of hearing, special effort is being made that during General Conference XI interpreters will be provided and there will be special workshops on sign language.

For those with problems of mobility special efforts are being made to provide easy access to all buildings and meeting rooms for the conference and encouragement across the Fellowship for districts and local congregations to adopt a resolution that all conferences will be held in such buildings and/or form that will be accessible to all when and wherever possible.

In addition for those who are visually impaired, or have special reading problems, materials for General Conference XI are being provided in those modes which will make the materials accessible to them. Throughout the course of the year taped copies of *"JOURNEY"* and *"THE GAY CHRISTIAN"* are available. Other Fellowship materials are being considered for reproduction in this mode. Lambda Resource Center for the Blind of Chicago, IL has compiled a list of books and other materials available for those with reading problems from a variety of libraries and agencies across the United States, and is available on tape or in Braille for a fee.

They have also produced a quarterly magazine available on tape for $11 per year, or loan basis, of articles from a variety of newspapers and magazines from around the country of Lesbian and Gay literature.

The Commission on Specialized Ministries is making every attempt to bring the world about us all into easy accessibility. Some of this is going to be done through the series, "Let's Do the Gospel," in which individual booklets will be written by those with special expertise and which will be available to congregations and districts through the Fellowship as Bible study material. At this time the Commission on Specialized Ministries has a real need and here are some of them:

1. Persons skilled in writing and special expertise who would be willing to put together booklets in the areas of the Physically handicapped; the mentally handicapped including mentally ill and mentally retarded; the terminally ill; the aging, youth; the transvestite; the transsexual; the bisexual; the invisible diseases such as heart disease, arthritis, etc. The areas of the deaf and hard of hearing and the visually impaired are presently being covered.
2. Persons within districts who would be responsible to focus some work within their district in any of the areas mentioned in 1. Such persons should contact the chairperson of the Commission for Specialized Ministries: the Rev. George S. McDermott, MCC of Greater Providence, POB 1462, Providence, RI 02901.
3. A person within the UFMCC who is committed to the extent that they would be willing to serve on the commission team of different ministries and would be willing to help

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Some reflections on the NCC

by R. Adam DeBaugh
Collective Writer
Co-Chair Ecumenical Relations

The November, 1982 meeting of the Governing Board of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. was a time of a great deal of excitement, stress, fulfillment and challenge. There are three thoughts I would like to share that have been developing in my mind over the time that we have been involved in the application for membership in the National Council of Churches.

I should stress that these reflections are my own and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches as a religious fellowship, the Board of Elders, the Department of Ecumenical Relations or the other members of our delegation to the Governing Board meeting in November.

The first thing that has struck me concerning the NCCC Governing Board is the very large number of Lesbians and Gay men who are on the Governing Board and serving on NCCC staff. They are, for obvious reasons, closetted. Only one person on the Governing Board, Paul Vandenberg of the United Methodist Church delegation, has had the courage and personal honesty to come out to the entire Governing Board in a clear and forthright way.

Others are closetted or open in varying degrees – some so closetted that we haven't had even a hint of their sexual orientation, others have come out to us directly but asked us to respect their need to remain closetted – something which we will, of course, do. Other members of the Governing Board hint around about their "personal commitment." Sadly, there are members who are themselves homosexual – I won't say Gay or Lesbian because those are pride words – but who act in anti-Gay ways.

The large number of Lesbians and Gay men on the Governing Board of the NCCC raises real issues of the nature of the mainline churches. It is a problem the Lesbian and Gay caucuses of the churches are struggling with constantly. The churches have historically been freaked out by human sexuality, especially homosexuality, yet they have also historically been a haven for homosexuals. The only reason Paul Vendenberg's courage and honesty is so significant is that we see it against a background of hypocrisy and lies.

We have heard about a church leader who arranged to have a young man appointed to the Governing Board in the hopes of being able to sleep with him at the twice-annual Governing Board meetings. To his credit, that young man has not succumbed to the "prince of the church's" blandishments, and to his everlasting shame (though he apparently doesn't feel shame) that church leader has been outspoken in opposition to the application of the UFMCC for membership because he says we are a "Gay church."

> UFMCC representatives will be meeting with Faith and Order of the National Council of Churches this month in San Francisco. This meeting is part of the process to continue dialoging with us.

The church of Jesus Christ is called to truth ["and the truth will make you free," John 8:32] and so it is especially sad that that same church, in all the different permutations that have resulted in the splintering of the Body of Christ into many different denominations, is fostering falsehood and lies.

It occurs to me that the individual members of the NCCC Governing Board and staff who are Lesbian and Gay and who are remaining in the closet are not to blame. They themselves are victims. They are victims of the hypocrisy and cruelty of their churches. The churches profess to be two-faced about its position on sexual orientation.

They continue to reject a theological position which affirms the love of the Creator for all of God's children – even Lesbians and Gays. And yet they know that Lesbians and Gays are – and always have been – an active part of their churches, from the laypeople in the pews to clergy to church bureaucrats to the very highest levels of church leadership. They know we are everywhere and yet they continue to condemn us and pretend that we are not there. They know we are there and yet they will not countenance our honesty, on the rare occasions when we are honest.

This leads directly to the second thing that has struck me as being significant. The real problem with our application to the National Council of Churches is not us so much, but fear, their fear of each other and the other members of their churches. First of all, if they deal with the Metropolitan Community Churches on the basis of our being a real church (to use their way of thinking) they will face incredible condemnation from right-wing people in all of their churches. The attacks on the National and World Councils of Churches in the Reader's Digest and on Sixty Minutes have been only part of a nation-wide attack on all ecumenical activity and any cooperation between denominations and religious fellowships.

The right-wing has singled out the National and World Councils of Churches for especially vituperative attack, based on false and misleading assertions that they are some-how extreme left wing and even Communist inspired organizations. It is clear that admission of the UFMCC into fellowship in the National Council of Churches would be added ammunition for attacks on the NCC from the more extreme right wing elements.

Secondly, if the church leaders in the NCC deal with the UFMCC, made up as it is of large numbers of open and proud Lesbians and Gay men, it will be much harder to deal with each other and the members of their churches who are Lesbians and Gays.

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by R. Adam DeBaugh
Collective Writer
Co-Chair Ecumenical Relations

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Others are closetted or open in varying degrees – some so closetted that we haven't had even a hint of their sexual orientation, others have come out to us directly but asked us to respect their need to remain closetted – something which we will, of course, do. Other members of the Governing Board hint around about their "personal commitment." Sadly, there are members who are themselves homosexual – I won't say Gay or Lesbian because those are pride words – but who act in anti-Gay ways.

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It occurs to me that the individual members of the NCCC Governing Board and staff who are Lesbian and Gay and who are remaining in the closet are not to blame. They themselves are victims. They are victims of the hypocrisy and cruelty of their churches. The churches profess to be two-faced about its position on sexual orientation.

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Lastly, it became clear to a number of people on the UFMCC delegation to the

Governing Board meeting in November that there are a large number of marginalized people -- people who are excluded from real power – on the Governing Board itself and in the structure of the National Council of Churches as a whole. They include women, Third World people, youth, the handicapped, closetted Lesbians and Gays, and the Orthodox church representatives.

Women, Third World people, the handicapped, and youth must be represented on each delegation and so are present in some numbers, with the handicapped being the least visible and present. The role of women in the churches has been a dismal story, even in the most liberal of denominations. There are women on the Governing Board in large numbers but with a few exceptions they are not in real leadership positions, nor do they have real influence and power. In some cases, women hold positions of influence at great personal risk to their own integrity and beliefs.

We will probably never know the compromises some women may have made in order to rise to positions of leadership in the church. Often, women are placed in leadership positions and then used to do battle against their own vested interests in order to keep and maintain their positions in the hierarchy. NCC leadership, for instance, has often scheduled the Third World and women's caucus meetings at Governing Board sessions for the same time, preventing Third World women from full participation at either caucus.

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Third World people are required to be part of every church delegation to the Governing Board. Very often this results in tokenism, of course, but it also has put the Third World people in a position of real marginalization. There is further separation between Third World people from predominantly Black churches and those Third World people in predominantly white churches. We have found, for instance, that we get a great deal of support from Third World people in the white churches, but that the Black churches in the NCC are mostly anti-UFMCC.

Youth delegates are required in each church delegation to the NCC Governing Board and they are often discounted and ignored, because of the very youth that mandated their presence in the first place. The young adult caucus is not very well organized, meeting during Governing Board meetings mostly for cocktails rather than for any real strategizing.

The few handicapped delegates are also given just lip service by the Governing Board for the most part and Governing Board meetings are distinct in their differences from UFMCC General Conferences and District Conferences in a number of ways as regards the handicapped, most notably the total absence of deaf signers.

Closetted Lesbians and Gay men are on the Governing Board and NCC staff in large numbers. Our conservative estimate is that fully 20% of the Governing Board and staff of the National Council of Churches are Lesbian and Gay. Naturally, they are kept firmly in their closets if they want to continue their work in their churches. They are not organized as an interest group in any way and most of them are not out to each other. They are not a cohesive force on the Council as a result of their fear. As mentioned earlier, some of them have been very supportive of us and our ministry, others have been most hostile.

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UFMCC's Commission on Faith, Fellowship and Order

SEXUAL WOUNDING SEXUAL HEALING

by Roger Webb
FFO Representative
Southwest District

EDITOR'S NOTE: During the last FFO meeting individual representatives volunteerd to write articles for JOURNEY. The FFO is presently developing a grass roots Christian Theology of Sexuality. The following article by Rev. Roger Webb, MCC Long Beach, CA does not report an official stand by Faith, Fellowship and Order. These articles will reflect the diversity of UFMCC.

Psalm 147:3 "God heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds."

How familiar is the following to you: "I can't take the loneliness anymore" or "I'm not so sure I can handle the pain of another relationship."

There are many sisters and brothers who are broken hearted when it comes to the breakdown of their personal lives. It affects laity and clergy alike. There are those suffering with the struggle to survive loneliness, overcome relationship despair, and there are those moving from one negative relationship to another one into another. There can be a strong sense of personal isolation and meaninglessness that respects no gender, color, political or theological condition.

People handle social and personal dysfunction in various ways. Some have withdrawn from most social contacts for the pain of disappointment or rejection became too great. How many have left MCC when their deep personal and social needs were not met? They returned to their isolated lives still carrying their broken hearts and wounds for we did not have the skills to help them cope and overcome this malaise.

There are also those who, instead of withdrawal, engage in frantic sexual-socio contact. Some want to celebrate their liberated sexuality while others try to avoid or kill the heartache of loneliness. (In an MCC Long Beach Men's Rap Group the average Gay male had been out eight years and had 150 to 650 different sexual partners depending on how one interpreted the statistics. Yet the common theme in spite of the number of sexual partners, was a strong sense of emotional deprivation and lack of nurturing.)

In addition to the above there is a sad reality that close to one-third of our people are chemically dependent. Considering they have friends, or lovers, one can appreciate the possibility that two-thirds of our community are victims of chemical abuse. They drown in their booze and pills or watch their loved ones harming themselves.

Another way people handle problems in their personal life is to immerse themselves in "the World of MCC." If I can be active enough for Jesus I can maybe A.) Stay out of the bars, B.) Find a lover C.) Have something to do with my time. Involvement in active church life can be a temporary healthy coping action but if done only to avoid personal dysfunction, time will eventually take its toll. Sufficient are the numbers of people this clergy person has seen who left MCC for their 'busyness' could not overcome their pain.

What is the root of these wounds?

The most obvious reason has been society's destruction of our self-esteem by their myths and stereotypes. The wounds have run deep and the wounding continues even though big strides have been made in the last 15 years with militant action. Some of these tapes need healing because they continue to affect our choices and values.

Through our healing service at MCC Long Beach an ugly reality surfaced. Molestation, incest and rape are all too prevalent among our sisters and brothers. This is especially a painful reality for Lesbians. Through one of our questionnaires to the congregation we found that three fourths of our sisters are rape or incest victims. It cannot be stressed enough how deeply this affects people for life. There is much healing work to be done among us.

And wounds get deeper and opened again with each negative significant encounter and relationship. For some this wounding can be so strong that there is a deep hostility towards God, towards others and towards themselves.

Is this being too dramatic? It may be for some, but behind the ordered worship services, meetings, socials and rituals that can make up the life of community there are significant numbers of our people who are crying out in loneliness. Those cries and needs need to be looked at as strongly as we look at racism and sexism. "Dehumanism" (if there ain't such a word, there oughta be) is another oppression visited upon our people who are already wounded.

MCC has committed itself to a liberating and loving Gospel proclamation. Let those who are captives to this oppression and dehumanism also be included. Part of our liberating function is to look at who we are in Jesus Christ. Jesus came bearing healing and setting people free with truth.

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Samaritan Extended Studies

NEW RESOURCES

Dr. Jeffrey Pulling, the Coordinator of Samaritan Extended Studies, has announced two new resources available to all MCC congregations and clergy: a series of workshops entitled *Sharing You and Your Faith*, and *Holy Week Worship Resources* for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Eve/Sunrise Vigil.

SHARING YOU AND YOUR FAITH is a series of six workshops designed to stimulate and encourage faith-sharing among Christians and between Christians and those who have not yet embraced the faith. The idea behind the workshops is interpersonal evangelism - sharing yourself and sharing your faith. The insights come from Scripture study and psychological/sociological understandings. The workshops include group presentations, sharing in small groups and in pairs, disclosure activities, role playing, etc.

Some of the themes explored in the workshops are: opening up to others, caring and trust, advantages of opening up, barriers to self-disclosure, taking a risk, knowing yourself, being sensitive to other people, understanding human needs and motives, growth in faith as a process, adopting a new idea and making it your own, sharing your faith through friendship, blocks to friendship, interaction with friends, being who you are, talking about your faith and spiritual matters, knowing the right time to share, and sharing what is meaningful and important to you.

A detailed outline of all six workshops comprises the packet called *Sharing You and Your Faith*. It is available for $5.00 (U.S.A. funds only) from Samaritan Extended Studies, 11 Columbia Street, Hartford, CT 06106. These workshop outlines are designed for both leader/facilitator and all participants. For orders of ten or more of these packets, the price is reduced to $4.00 each.

HOLY WEEK WORSHIP RESOURCES is a packet of complete services for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter

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PROFILE continued from page 5

God was moving--I couldn't have stopped it. I didn't want to.

Our congregation kept on loving and reaching out--visiting in his home, inviting them to dinner or drinks. I kept thinking how many people, afraid of death and dying, would have felt awkward, avoided him, been maudlin and silly with him. But *these* people are remarkable. They ministered to him and he to them, and his dying with us continued to be a gift. Because his dying was a celebration of life--physical and eternal.

Michael Mank, bless him, had been John's friend longer than any of us. They knew one another when. So Michael facilitated the process which led to the CCCC's special action. And I stood with John and Troy and the others the night at Western Clergy Conference when John was ordained. And his lover, the "nonbeliever" and still overwhelmed by the love being shown, stood with him. And began plans for a large memorial donation to establish a scholarship for seminary students in our congregation. And we had a champagne reception and celebrated. Celebration was characteristic of this death. How very Christian.

It began to get difficult, then. He couldn't ride his beloved bike anymore. And he had to be helped up and down steps to the sanctuary platform. But he was ministering still, and that was what mattered to all of us. On December 12th he preached what we felt would be his last sermon for us. He sat on a stool to do it and read from a manuscript because he wasn't sure of his command of words any more. And he served Communion, and we cried as I knelt before him to receive mine. It's so hard for me to cry ("*Real* men don't cry," you know), and it was such a blessing with him. He preached to us that day of the wonder in Mary's heart and of the wonder of life in Christmas.

The tumor grew in the depth of his brain, big as a clenched fist. And God's healing was going on all around it. I saw it daily. God was healing each of us and through us each other. There was healing in this dying. I kept learning not to second-guess God. (I expect I'll go on learning that all my life. I'm a hard case and this work is really cut out for God.)

Tuesday evening I learned he was near the end. Wednesday Janie drove over from her new ministry and we went up to John's home and sat around the table with them. No surprise--the champagne and the laughter and the tears flowed as always. He gave me the gift of some good time alone, just him and me, to say the things one needs to say. And he told me especially how good it was to know the things he had believed, preached, shared with others who were dying were still real for him. His faith made him happy and free, except for the sadness there always is in parting. Finally, it was time for me to go and I knew I wouldn't see him in this life again.

Life really is a "B" movie and all the lines are dumb. But they mean so much. As I looked back from the door I said, on purpose and knowing I meant it, "I'll see you later." And he said, on purpose and meaning it, "You sure will!"

That night I went carolling with the congregation and got home early. The call I expected came about 10:00 – his lover (the "nonbeliever") calling the pastor, the friend to come and sit with them for a couple of hours until John's body was picked up. We sat with his body quietly for a bit. Then we went downstairs and talked and--you guessed it--celebrated with good wine. What a gift for me, to share in the sadness with these loved ones out of the joy of John's life. What peace in the six weeks of life when all was said between them that needed saying--the love, the memories, the regrets, the wishes. He had sat up all the previous night writing letters to us--letters of love and joy and faith. We read them and shared them with one another. His spelling and grammar was just awful. And I'll cherish that beautiful letter as long as I live.

We thought God brought John to be on our full-time staff. We laid on hands for the healing of John's tumor. We weren't wrong. We have to take the perceiving of God's will a step at a time, and our own perceptions of it with a grain of salt. John was dying and God gave us the gift of bringing him home to die with us, so we might have a new glimpse of the glory that is ours. We prayed for healing, and the gift of healing came to so many of us, and all of us, in those days of his life with us. "If we live, we live in Christ and if we die, we die in Christ." "Thanks be to God for this indescribably gift!"

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If you know someone for "Profile" please send us their name and a way in which we can contact them. Include a brief statement why you would like them considered Or you can recommend yourself or write an article yourself. Please send all information to JOURNEY. Pictures are real important.

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movie REVIEW

GANDHI

by George S. McDermott
Pastor, MCC of Greater Providence

" . . . a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief . . ." Such might be the description of Mohandas Gandhi, known as the Mahatma. Born the 2nd of October, 1869, Gandhi spent the major part of his 78 years seeking peace, freedom from oppression from British rule in his native land of India. He knew his "sorrows" and his "griefs," but maintained a never ending struggle for peace and non-violence.

GANDHI, produced by Sir Richard Attenborough, presents the Mahatma as one may have never seen him. Although learned according to information received in the film, he was a person who wished to be "with" his people and not "above" them. The film depicts Gandhi as one who moved from the business suit and formal wear to the less aristocratic mode of dress of the tunic and dress of the common people of the land. In the midst of police brutality; in the midst of massacre of men, women and children; in the midst of a system that sets up class by which each oppresses another, stands and walks Gandhi, seeking the rights for the people; seeking the rights of all people to be human and to live in dignity even at the very risk of destruction at the hands of the system which he struggles through.

Whatever is depicted in the wave upon wave of human souls being beaten, bludgeoned by those of the establishment that could not stand to see their authority threatened, is the phenomenal sound of clubs striking flesh, the screams and deep moans of men struck down by a force that could not stand their desire to be free, the sound of screams of men, women and children as the sharp and continuous repeat of rifle and machine guns ripped through flesh to bring down those who stood seeking that which was and is rightfully theirs. Then came the non-sensitive, self-righteous tones of those who carried out such despicable crimes as if they had done it to animals with little or no sensitivity. One wanted to scream, to even strike out in defense of the defenseless.

Even Gandhi it seems knew his day of oppressive attitude towards those who were women as so poignantly put forth in a remarkable scene between he and his wife. But, ah, for the woman she was – she won and for the first time even Gandhi, peace loving, caring, non-violent Gandhi found his place – not above women, but beside them. Yes, Gandhi was not perfect; for even at the time of the death of his wife there seemed to be another woman who already was claiming his attention, and it was evident above everything else Gandhi was human, not a god.

It has been said since Gandhi's death on January 30, 1948 by an assassin's bullet, that he may have well been more Christian than most Christians. The scenes depicting the periods of fast, the continuous efforts to make sure that his own people would not raise up in violence against those who would abuse them, his willingness to permit himself to receive abuse both physically and mentally for what he knew to be right, and finally in a moment of serenity and peace brought down by one who found Gandhi a possible threat to his own security in his own oppression. Such do we find Mohandas Gandhi – person of peace, person of hope, person of many griefs and sorrows, but above all, male in form but representative of all people who strive for dignity and integrity, who strive for peace and power just to have the "freedom just to be."

GANDHI becomes a powerful documentary of one who sought, and continued to find, amidst great odds, peace in his time, but most of all loved people regardless of their status, wealth, or power. Even with the 15 minute break midway in the film, it captures one's interest and respect for the writer's intensive research and for those who act out the powerful and dramatic roles.

Amidst the sounds of the action, the thought provoking words of Gandhi, action and the enriching beauty of the setting, peace and love radiate as a central theme to life and its meaning.

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GAY CIVIL RIGHTS BILL RE-INTRODUCED IN 98TH CONGRESS

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SEXUAL HEALING

Where do we need healing in our souls for the wounds of childhood, societal pressures, negative relationships, and anything else that inhibits complete wholeness as Christians?

Where can the abundant life be established for our people that they might have sobriety, creative singleness, fulfilling relationships and, yes, even the recovery of romance to go along with our guilt free sexual contact with members of the same sex? Where is forgiveness needed for those who have wounded us? Where do we begin to seek the healing and how do we heal? This author has seen lives changed through the gift of inner healing. I have also seen God use AA, professional counselling and mutual support groups to get our people whole again. God's ways seem to be not only exciting but diverse.

If any of these wounds and hurts have deeply affected you, do not be hesitant to ask God to send you to the healing instruments for your life. Furthermore, FFO is also interested in your story and as more grass roots work is done, we hope you will have opportunities to share your experience with us. We have much to learn from each other about our wounding and gladly so, in our healing experiences.

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organize persons within each district with that same special interest. (At present the ministry to the deaf and hard of hearing is being chaired under the commission on a Fellowship level by Patrick Sterling of Dallas.) Along with the chairperson of the commission each of these persons would function together as a team to work with the chair in providing special ministries around UFMCC.

4. Local congregations and pastors, worship coordinators and lay concerns representatives who see the urgency to do something locally in making sure that one more segment of their community is ministered to.
5. Above all, and since no budget is so provided, funds to assist in making some of this possible. At this time there are no funds for the chairperson of the Commission to visit some of the districts and work with some of the teams there; no funds available so that special materials can be reproduced for the visually impaired or those with seeing problems; no funds available for interpreters for the deaf, if no volunteers available, so that all events, including workshops, business meetings and other programs are available to them; no funds for the rental, if necessary, of special equipment such as ramps, etc. for accessibility of buildings, etc. for the physically and mentally handicapped; and no funds just to make sure that the work is accomplished.

THE NEED? Persons who may not be able to provide a specialized service to any specific group of persons needing any of the previously mentioned services, but who could provide a special service through the donation of a gift of money to the Commission on Specialized Ministries so that some of this work may be accomplished between now and at least General Conference XI or until a new budget is put forth in October, 1983, with a budget item, hopefully, for the Commission.

Funds are difficult to come by, but someone may indeed find the call of Christ "to do it unto the least of these my brothers and sisters . . ." as a personal call to give financially when in other ways they may not be able to give; or in the case of others the call to determine that they must become involved, for some day it may be we who need the service, and what if there is no one to provide the service?

Christ calls each of us to committment. For each of us that committment takes a different shape, but in each case it is a call to be committed to serve God's people. As Peter learned so shockingly and thusly found compelled to speak forth that "God has no favorites" (Acts 10:34-35) and thusly God has called us to minister to ALL people regardless.

Who have you chosen to ignore because they don't meet your criteria? God loves them and they meet God's criteria. God loves you, and because of that love God calls you through Christ Jesus to do to others as you would wish it done to you. Even so, my sisters and brothers, as you have done it to these whom God loves, you have done it to Christ. God loves you and so do I.

Books — a review

by Elaine Hall
Lay Minister
DeColores MCC

KEEPER OF ACCOUNTS, by Irene Klepfisz, published by Persephone Press.

I will begin this review by saying that Irene Klepfisz's book of poetry, *KEEPER OF ACCOUNTS*, has moved me in a way few books have.

KEEPER OF ACCOUNTS is divided into four sections: I. From the Monkey House and Other Cages, II. Different Enclosures, III. Urban flowers and IV. Inhospitable Soil.

"From the Monkey House and Other Cages" describes, in tight lines and simple words, the experiences of two female monkeys, mother and daughter, born in captivity. The anguish of these poems is real. It is a very hard, factual anguish. Information is given. Nothing is explained. The monkeys are caught in their confusion and despair. No one rescues them.

"Different Enclosures" continues the theme of confinement. The "enclosure" is the world of the office worker. These poems describe the work that women perform every day in offices all over the world, typing, filing, proofreading, so that the wheels of industry may continue to turn smoothly. Klepfisz's viewpoint is that of the woman who is a writer, trapped in a job that eats away her time, energy and confidence, until she is frustrated and distanced from her real work, writing.

"Urban Flowers" is a metaphor for all the beautiful things, people and flowers, struggling for life in the ugliness of the city.

The last section of the book, "Inhospitable Soil," tells of Klepfisz's experiences in Poland during World War II. Klepfisz and her mother managed to escape Hitler's death camps by "passing" as Polish country people.

They hid out in the countryside, suffering near-starvation, the loss of their family, the constant terror of discovery. Klepfisz, in this section, moves back and forth from the Poland of her childhood to Cherry Plain, New York, where she now lives, a town that's predominantly German-American.

In these poems, Irene Klepfisz talks about being a survivor. She claims her Jewish identity, her identity as a woman and a poet. She claims the responsibility of being a "keeper of accounts."

KEEPER OF ACCOUNTS is an important book that will be remembered for a long time.

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Lesbians & Scripture

by Bob Arthur
Collective Writer

Last month we considered a new idea about what Jesus meant when he condemned those who would call a brother raca, or "sissy." This month we want to consider a passage some have felt condemns Lesbianism.

Interestingly enough, there is only one such passage in all of Scripture, and that is Romans 1:26: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections; for even their women did exchange the natural use for that which is against nature," (KJV).

The first thing that should strike us about this passage is the first phrase: For this cause." This grammatically indicates that we are looking at the second part of an idea. We have spelled out in verse 26 the results of some cause not mentioned in this verse.

The first law of hermeneutics (the science of Bible interpretation) is that one never takes a text out of context. This means that we at least need to find the cause referred to in verse 26. All we need to do is look back one verse to verse 25 to find that cause: there are those "who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator . . ."

The history of humanity is one of worshipping false gods: things that are part of the creation God has given us to enjoy. God gave us the sun to benefit us, and for our enjoyment. But how often do we then make it more important than the God who gave it to us, and it then becomes our idol. Our love for the sun becomes a perverted love (lust, or vile affection), and natural consequences ensue: sunburn, cancer, etc.

In the same way, God gave us sex to use and enjoy. But when it becomes more important than the God who gave it to us, it becomes an idol in our lives, and our love for that idol becomes perverted and is known as lust or vile affection. Verse 26 tells us that women who so worship sex will find its natural use and place in their lives perverted, and the natural consequences will enuse: unnatural sex.

Of course, the next question is what is unnatural sex? Some just naturally assume that unnatural female sex is Lesbianism. But why? Just what does the word natural mean? The English dictionary defines it as that which is commonly observed. We find that the apostle Paul uses the Greek word for natural in the same way. For example, look at I Corinthians 2:14: "the natural person receives not the things of the Spirit of God." There are some who would say that if it is natural it is godly, but I think the above example will adequately refute that idea.

So just what is Paul saying? If a woman worships sex, the place of sex in her life and her expressions of sex will be unnatural, or that which is not commonly observed in her makeup. This could be anything from nymphomania, necrophilia, prostitution, change of sexuality, or many other sexual expressions which are unnatural for her.

Therefore, if we can find Lesbianism referred to at all in this verse, it would be a heterosexual woman who needs to worship her god of sex so much that she will unnaturally turn to women to fulfill that need. However, the same can be applied to Lesbians. If they are guilty of worshipping sex as a god, then in their effort to fulfill their lust for sex they might even turn to men.

The bottom line, however, is that this all is a result of putting something created (sex) above God in our lives. This is a passage of Scripture (all of Romans I) which needs to be preached in our churches. How many kinds of idols have crept into our lives? Anything which becomes first in our lives instead of God has dire consequences, whether that idol be sex, money, alcohol, food, a lover, or even church.

However, if we keep God in first place in our lives, verse 26 has no bearing upon us whatsoever. "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," Matthew 22:37.

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fellowship news

our journey

INSTALLATION SERVICE CELEBRATED AT DE COLORES MCC

DeColores MCC, Eagle Rock, CA installed their new pastor, Rev. Shelley Hamilton on January 23rd.

Preaching were Paula Schoenwether who had served as interim worship coordinator and Rev. Nancy Wilson, Clerk of the Board of Elders.

Liturgy was written by Rev. Lucia Chappelle and Loni Allen, a student clergy.

About 80 people attended the worship service with 40 staying for a sit down dinner organized by Debra McGrady, a board member.

"Jeri and the Geritols," sang 'Amazing Grace' as a special gift. Lead singer was Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey. Chorus members were board and staff of MCC Los Angeles.

Hamilton arrived at her new church in December moving from New York City where she attended Union Theological Seminary.

DISTRICT MINISTER COORDINATOR VISITS GARDEN GROVE MCC

Rev. L. Robert Arthur, Southwest District Coordinator, visited New Covenant Metropolitan Community Church in Garden Grove on Sunday, February 6, 1983. He presented a brief message during the 11:00 Eucharist and was invited to preach the sermon in a special Sunday evening service at 7:00. Between both services, he visited the officers, staff clergy and members of the congregation.

ORCHESTRA PLAYERS NEEDED

To Play in the
General Conference Orchestra

Please write telling what instrument you can play and your experience to:

Mr. Danny Ray
MCC Dallas Music Department
2701 Reagan Street
Dallas, Texas 75219

If you play an instrument and would like to participate in a volunteer orchestra for General Conference in Toronto, you are needed.

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These worship services may be purchased individually for $2.00 each (U.S.A. funds only) or as a packet of all three services for $5.00. Order from Samaritan Extended Studies, 11 Columbia Street, Hartford, CT 06106.

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SOME REFLECTIONS

which is the National Council of Churches is not effectively rocked by any marginalized group getting too big. What are the greatest threats the UFMCC poses to the ecumenical community? The greatest threats we pose are and end to religious hypocrisy; the affirmation of the role of women, Third World people, the handicapped, the poor and disenfranchized, Gays and Lesbians and youth in the church; the success of the ecumenical experiment which is the UFMCC.

They are talking about re-uniting the fractured Body of Christ, but we have done it for the past 14 years by bringing together believing Christians from every conceivable religious background and actually being able to worship together in loving Christian community.

They won't ever have a communion service because large numbers of their members won't go to the eucharist with other members of the NCC. We have overcome the theological questions of eucharist, baptism and confession that still divide the Christian world.

And finally, the possibility that our witness will unite the marginalized groups that have been effectively kept apart from each other by the leadership of the National Council of Churches.